

INCOMING TELEGRAM**Department of State**

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Rec'd:

FEBRUARY 17, 1961

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FROM: KHORRAMSHAHR

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 29, FEBRUARY 17

PRIORITY

SENT DEPARTMENT 29, REPEATED INFORMATION PRIORITY TEHRAN 120,
BAGHDAD 16, BASRA 16, LONDON 15.

IN APPARENTLY SUDDEN REVERSED ATTITUDE, IRANIANS DECIDED REOPEN SHATT AL ARAB ISSUE OVER BERTHING AT ABADAN. PORT DIRGEN MOGHADAM INFORMED SHIPPING AGENTS IRANIAN HARBORMASTERS WOULD TAR OVER ABADAN BERTHING 1800 FEBRUARY 16. THIS STEP TAKEN WITHOUT IRAQI ACQUIESCENCE. BASRA PORT ADMINISTRATION INFORMED SHIPS SCHEDULED LEAVE ABADAN AFTER DEADLINE THAT IRAQI PILOTS WOULD NOT BE PROVIDED VESSELS USING IRANIAN HARBORMASTERS AND FURTHER THAT SUCH SHIPS WOULD BE BLACK LISTED. I WAS ALSO INFORMED BPA TOLD BRITISH SHIPPING AGENCY GRAY MACKENZIES BASRA REPRESENTATIVE IRAQIS WOULD STOP ANY SHIP TRAVERSING SHATT WITHOUT IRAQI PILOT. IRAQIS TURNED OUT SHATT NAVIGATION LIGHTS AT 1800 FOR "REPAIRS".

SHIPS IMMEDIATELY AFFECTED INCLUDE AMERICAN EASTERN AGENCYS TANKER STANVAC CANBERRA UNDER PANAMANIAN REGISTRY AND THREE TANKERS HANDLED BY GRAY MACKENZIE. ONE SMALL TANKER LEFT EARLY FEBRUARY 17 WITH IRAQI HARBORMASTER APPARENTLY BEFORE IRANIANS AWAKE.

MATTERS AT IMPASSE SINCE MOST MASTERS UNLIKELY PROCEED DOWN SHATT WITHOUT IRAQI PILOT AND NOT PERMITTED LEAVE ABADAN JETTIES WITHOUT IRANIAN HARBORMASTER. UNLESS SOMETHING GIVES WAY SOON, SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS COULD RESULT FROM ENSUING SHIPPING TRAFFIC JAM.

MAESTRONE

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